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Influential Cuban dissident says his fight against government will continue off the island

By GISELA SALOMON
Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Influential Cuban dissident leader José Daniel Ferrer, recently exiled from Cuba, says that the island's fractured and weakened opposition movements need to shift strategies and oppose the government from outside the Caribbean nation.

The comments from Ferrer, in an interview with The Associated Press, come after he spent years in prison in Cuba where he believed he could fuel a larger fight against the government. "Being a prisoner turned me into a symbol of resistance," he told the AP in Miami.

Now, although he would prefer to be in Cuba, he said he believes he and other exiles must build a strategy outside of the island.

Ferrer said he was forced to leave his country because of the continuing government crackdown on critics triggered by mass anti-government protests that broke out in 2021. It has fueled an exodus of civil society representatives, activists and journalists, weakening groups who oppose the government.

Ferrer arrived in Miami earlier this month on a flight from Cuba with family and U.S. officials.

Cuban dissident Jose Daniel Ferrer speaks of his experience leaving Cuba during an interview Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2025, in Miami.

Associated Press

"The only way to stay in contact with my activists scattered across the island ... the only way to help relieve people of their hunger and lack of resources so many people face is to leave the country," he said. "That's how we can turn into a political force that's actually effective."

Mounting crackdown and geopolitical tensions

Cuba's government remains locked in a decades-long geopolitical feud with the U.S. government and has been economically crippled by U.S. sanctions.

President Donald Trump has reinstated hardline policies toward Havana, toughening sanctions and reinstating a ban on American tourism to the communist island. Such measures have been criticized as disproportionately affecting the people of Cuba rather than the government that the Trump administration hopes to combat.

As leader of a dissident movement in his home city of Santiago de Cuba, Ferrer had been in and out of prison in recent decades.

Most recently, Ferrer was convicted of violating house arrest — something often imposed on dissident figures — to protest during mass-demonstrations in 2021. Ferrer has denied the charges.

While human rights groups and the U.S. government have in the past described Ferrer as a political prisoner, Cuba's government denies holding any political prisoners.

Ferrer said that during his detention he was tortured — including beatings and being force-fed rotten meat through a tube — in what he described as an effort by Cuban authorities to force him to leave the island.

He said that Cuban officials also pressured him to reach out to the U.S. Embassy and the Catholic Church in hopes of facilitating a deal for Cuba to release prisoners in exchange for an easing of sanctions. Ferrer said he refused to do that.

Cuba's government did not respond to a request for comment about allegations of torture or pressuring Ferrer to seek negotiations with the Trump administration. It did publicly acknowledge that Ferrer was released following a formal request by American authorities, and previously has denied that Ferrer was tortured.

'Leaving the country was my only option'

Ferrer said that for years he refused to leave the island because his imprisonment made him a kind of martyr who motivated other Cubans to oppose the government.

But in recent years, particularly in the wake of the 2021 protests, Ferrer said it's been harder to organize on the island, and that the government has gone after his family, including threatening to arrest his partner. The ongoing crackdown and exodus of opposition figures has had what Ferrer described as a chilling effect.

"Leaving the country was my only option," he said, noting he hopes to return someday.

In December, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights condemned what it called "growing repression in Cuba against opponents and dissidents" including targeting journalists, activists and political opponents. The commission said the Cuban government used internet shutdowns, house arrests, surveillance, detentions, fines and interrogations to go after opponents.

Ferrer has been given a number of concessions not usually afforded to dissidents, such as leaving the country with his family, including the mother of one of his daughters.

The U.S. State Department said in a statement that it did not negotiate with the Cuban government for Ferrer's release, though it did publicly acknowledge that Ferrer was released following a formal request by American authorities.❑

The William McKinley Monument is silhouetted in front of the west side of the Ohio Statehouse, April 15, 2024, in Columbus, Ohio.

Associated Press

Ohio panel unveils proposed U.S. House map that could help Republicans win more seats

By DAVID A. LIEB and MARK SCOLFORO
Associated Press

Ohio's Republican-led redistricting commission unveiled a proposed U.S. House map Thursday that could give Republicans a chance at winning two more seats in next year's midterm elections, bolstering President Donald Trump's efforts to hold on to a slim congressional majority.

Ohio's redistricting plan comes amid a nationwide battle for partisan advantage ahead of next year's congressional elections. Trump kick-started the fray this summer by urging Republican-led states to reshape their U.S. House districts in an attempt to win more seats. Republican lawmakers in Texas, Missouri and North Carolina already have done so.

Democrats in California have countered with their own redistricting plan being decided by voters in a Tuesday election. And other states, including Republican-led Indiana and Virginia's Democratic-led General Assembly, are convening in special sessions aimed at redistricting.

Unlike those other states, which are voluntarily redrawing districts, Ohio is required by its state constitution to enact new congressional districts before the 2026 elections because the current map was adopted by Republican officials without bipartisan support.

The proposed map appears to increase Republican chances in the districts held by Democratic U.S. Reps. Greg Landsman in Cincinnati and Marcy Kaptur around Toledo, an area that gave Trump a majority in the 2024 presidential election. Kaptur won a 22nd term last fall by about 2,400 votes, or less than 1 percentage point. Landsman was reelected with more than 54% of the vote last year.

Each seat could be pivotal, because Democrats need to gain just three seats nationally in next year's elections to win control of the House from Republicans and impede Trump's agenda. The president's party historically has lost seats in midterm elections.

The Ohio Redistricting Commission faces a Friday deadline to adopt a new map, which would require support from at least two Republicans and two Democrats on the seven-member panel.❑

Justice Department strips Jan. 6 references from court paper and punishes prosecutors who filed it

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department has stripped references to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack from court papers and punished two federal prosecutors who filed the document seeking prison time at sentencing Thursday for a man arrested with guns and ammunition near former President Barack Obama's home.

The prosecutors from the U.S. attorney's office in the District of Columbia were locked out of their government devices and told they were being put on leave Wednesday morning shortly after they filed a sentencing memorandum describing the crowd of President Donald Trump supporters who attacked the Capitol as a "mob of rioters," according to a person familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss personnel issues.

Later Wednesday, the Justice Department replaced the court filing with an updated version that stripped references to the Jan. 6 riot. The new filing also no longer included a reference to the fact that Trump posted on social media what he claimed was Obama's address on the same day that the defendant, Taylor Taranto, was arrested in the former president's neighborhood.

An officer with the Uniform Division of the United States Secret Service sits in his car at a checkpoint near the home of President Barack Obama, Oct. 24, 2018, in Washington.

Associated Press

It's the latest move by the Justice Department to discipline attorneys tied to the massive Jan. 6 prosecution and represents an extraordinary effort by the government to erase the history of the riot that left more than 100 police officers injured.

Trump himself for years has worked to downplay the violence and paint as victims the rioters who stormed the Capitol and sent lawmakers running into hiding as they met to certify Joe Biden's 2020 presidential election victory. Since Trump's sweeping Jan. 6 pardons in January, his administration has fired or demoted numerous attorneys involved in the largest investigation in Justice Department history.

The Justice Department declined to comment on Thursday.

Jeanine Pirro, the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, said her office would not comment on personnel decisions, but added: "We have and will continue to vigorously pursue justice against those who commit or threaten violence without regard to the political party of the offender or the target."

Judge praises punished prosecutors

U.S. District Judge Carl Nichols, who was nominated to the bench by Trump, praised the two prosecutors who were replaced on the case before he sentenced Taranto to the time he already has served in jail. Nichols said the prosecutors, Samuel White and Carlos Valdivia, did a "truly excellent job" and "upheld the highest standards of professionalism." But neither the judge nor the new prosecutors addressed any reason for placing them on leave.

The judge also said he intends to unseal prosecutors' original sentencing memo unless they can justify in writing why it shouldn't be made public again.

Taranto served over 22 months in pretrial detention before he was released after the trial. Nichols sentenced him to 21 months in prison and three years of supervised release.

Prosecutors had recommended a prison sentence of two years and three months. He was convicted in May for illegally possessing two guns and roughly 500 rounds of ammunition in Obama's neighborhood in June 2023. ❑

FBI makes several arrests among Mississippi law enforcement agencies, sheriff says

By SOPHIE BATES
Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — A Mississippi deputy sheriff was arrested Thursday by the FBI, one of several arrests it made across multiple law enforcement agencies in the state, a local sheriff said.

Sunflower County Sheriff James Haywood confirmed the arrest of his deputy, Marvin Flowers. He also said the FBI arrested the sheriffs of two other counties, in addition to other law enforcement officers, on allegations of public corruption. Haywood did not provide further details about the allegations.

"The public's trust is going to be destroyed," Haywood said. "This is a big blow for law enforcement."

Haywood said Flowers worked for the department for 13 years. Sunflower County is in the northwest part of the state.

It wasn't immediately known if Haywood had a lawyer .

The FBI office in Jackson, the state capital, said it planned a major announcement later Thursday together with the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Northern District of Mississippi. It did not elaborate on the nature of the planned announcement.

Multiple Mississippi law enforcement agencies and sheriffs have faced federal scrutiny in recent years.

In 2024, the former Hinds County Sheriff Marshand Crisler was convicted of accepting $9,500 in bribes and knowingly providing ammunition to a convicted felon. The same year, former Noxubee County Sheriff Terry Grassaree pleaded guilty to making false statements to the FBI while being questioned about requesting and receiving nude photos from a female inmate.

William Brewer, a former Tallahatchie County sheriff, was sentenced to six years in prison in 2019 for extorting brides from a drug dealer.❑

The seal of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is displayed at its headquarters in Washington, Nov. 18, 2024.

Associated Press

Ex-South Carolina sheriff pleads guilty to drug-related crimes and stealing from benevolence fund

By JEFFREY COLLINS
Associated Press

ANDERSON, S.C. (AP) — A former South Carolina sheriff pleaded guilty Thursday to federal charges that he helped steal about $80,000 from his force's benevolence fund and took pain medication that was supposed to be destroyed as part of a pill take-back program.

Chuck Wright, the former Spartanburg County sheriff, admitted his guilt to conspiring to commit theft concerning programs receiving federal funds, conspiring to commit wire fraud and obtaining controlled substances through misrepresentation.

In a statement released by his lawyers, Wright, 60, said he lived the American dream after leaving his abusive home when he was 16 to work and live with the fire department, rising to be sheriff of the county where he was born.

"I squandered that dream job through my actions and for that I simply ask that the people of Spartanburg and my brothers and sisters in law enforcement forgive me," Wright said, adding he takes full responsibility, will accept his sentence and will never work in law enforcement again.

Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright speaks during a news conference in front of Todd Kohlhepp's property in Woodruff, S.C., Nov. 6, 2016.

Associated Press

The maximum penalty for the three counts combined is nearly 30 years, although Wright will likely receive a much lighter sentence. He also will have to pay at least $440,000 in restitution. A sentencing date has not been set.

Wright is at least the 12th sheriff in South Carolina to be convicted or to plead guilty to on-duty crimes in the past 15 years, for misconduct including extorting drug dealers, having inmates work at their homes, and hiring a woman and pressuring her to have sex.

Sheriffs run the law enforcement organizations in the state's 46 counties. South Carolina law gives the elected officials wide latitude over how their money is spent, what crimes their agencies concentrate on stopping and who gets hired and fired. They also provide little oversight beyond a vote by the people of each county every four years.

Beyond abusing power, there is little in common among the convicted sheriffs. They've been in small rural agencies and big, urban ones. There was a scheme to create false police reports to help clients of a friend's credit repair business. A sheriff took bribes to keep a restaurant owner's employees from being deported. One covered up an illegal arrest. And another punched a woman in the face and stole her cellphone.

State and federal agents investigated Wright and many of the other convicted sheriffs. U.S. Attorney Bryan Stirling said lawlessness, even among the powerful, isn't tolerated.

"Fighting corruption is what we should do in law enforcement," Stirling said outside court. "Nothing make a law enforcement officer madder than seeing police cross the line."

In Wright's case, the former sheriff, along with the agency's chaplain who also pleaded guilty Thursday, plundered the fund meant to help deputies who face financial difficulties. ❑

Felony dropped after a man spent a month in a Tennessee jail for a Charlie Kirk post

By R.J. RICO
Associated Press

Authorities in Tennessee have dropped a felony charge against a man who was jailed for more than a month over a Facebook post he made about the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

Whereas many people across the U.S. lost their jobs over social media comments about Kirk's death, Larry Bushart's case stood out as one of the few instances where such online speech has led to criminal prosecution.

His arrest — on a charge of threatening mass violence at a school — alarmed free speech advocates, who said Perry County Sheriff Nick Weems had targeted Bushart because of his political views. Bushart was released Wednesday after prosecutors sought to dismiss the charge.

Signs with a photo of Charlie Kirk are seen before Vice President JD Vance speaks at a Turning Point USA event at the Pavilion at Ole Miss at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss., Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2025.

Associated Press

Bushart, a 61-year-old former law enforcement officer, had posted numerous memes on Facebook making light of Kirk's killing. The one that got Bushart arrested was a meme featuring President Donald Trump and the words, "We have to get over it." That quote, the meme explained, was said by Trump last year after a school shooting at Iowa's Perry High School.

Posting the meme, Bushart wrote: "This seems relevant today..."

Weems told news outlets that most of Bushart's "hate memes" were lawful free speech, but residents were alarmed by the school shooting post, thinking Bushart was threatening the local Perry County High School, even though Weems said he knew the meme was referencing a school in Iowa. "Investigators believe Bushart was fully aware of the fear his post would cause and intentionally sought to create hysteria within the community," Weems said in a statement to The Tennessean last month.

He said Bushart was arrested after refusing to delete the post. His bail was set at $2 million. Bushart spent more than five weeks in jail before being released. Neither Weems nor Hans Schwendimann, the local district attorney, immediately responded to requests for comment on why the charge was dropped.

"Very happy to be going home," Bushart told WOPC-FM after his release. "I didn't seek to be a media sensation, but here we are."❑

Neck-and-neck finish in Dutch election as Wilders' far-right party and centrist D66 tie

Far-right anti Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders, second left, casts his vote at a polling station during general elections in The Hague, Netherlands, Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2025.

Associated Press

By MIKE CORDER and MOLLY QUELL
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders' far-right Party for Freedom and the centrist D66 were tied with nearly all votes counted Thursday in the Dutch general election in an unprecedented neck-and-neck race to become the biggest party.

The near-total count tallied and published by Dutch national news agency ANP and cited by Dutch media showed each party winning 26 seats in Wednesday's election.

The nail-biting finish is expected to lead to delays in starting the process of forming a new coalition. No Dutch election has previously ended with two parties tied for the lead.

When D66 reached its previous record of 24 seats in in 2021, the leader at the time, Sigrid Kaag, danced for joy on a table at a party meeting. This time, current D66 leader Rob Jetten cut cake for the party faithful gathered at Parliament.

"This is the best result for D66 ever," the 38-year old told a crowd party insiders and media on Thursday morning after he'd been welcomed with chants of the party's optimistic election slogan "Het kan wel," or "It is possible."

Wilders' Party for Freedom is forecast to lose 11 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, while D66 gains 17, according to the vote count. Wilders insisted early Thursday that his party, known by its Dutch acronym PVV, should play a leading role in coalition talks if it is the largest. "As long as there's no 100% clarity on this, no D66 scout can get started. We will do everything we can to prevent this," he said. A scout is an official appointed by the winning party to look into possible coalitions.

Wilders faces an uphill battle to return to government, however. Mainstream parties including D66 have ruled out forming a coalition with the PVV, arguing that Wilders' decision to torpedo the outgoing four-party coalition in June in a dispute over migration underscored that he is an untrustworthy partner.

As a result, which party ultimately gets the largest number of seats is "completely and utterly irrelevant," political scientist Henk van der Kolk told The Associated Press.❑

King Charles III is stripping Prince Andrew of titles and evicting him from royal residence

By BRIAN MELLEY and JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — King Charles III is stripping his disgraced brother Prince Andrew of his remaining titles and evicting him from his royal residence after weeks of pressure to act over Andrew's relationship with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Buckingham Palace said Thursday that the king has "initiated a formal process to remove the Style, Titles and Honours of Prince Andrew."

Andrew will be known as Andrew Mountbatten Windsor and not as a prince, and he will move from his Royal Lodge residence into "private accommodation."

Pressure had been growing on the palace to oust the prince from Royal Lodge after he surrendered his use of the title Duke of York earlier this month over his friendship with Epstein and allegations by one of Epstein's victims, Virginia Roberts Giuffre.

But the king went even further, stripping him of the title of prince that he has had since birth as a child of a monarch, the late Queen Elizabeth II.

"These censures are deemed necessary, notwithstanding the fact that he continues to deny the allegations against him," the palace said.

"Their Majesties wish to make clear that their thoughts and utmost sympathies have been, and will remain with, the victims and survivors of any and all forms of abuse."

Andrew faced a new round of public opprobrium after emails emerged earlier this month showing he had remained in contact with Epstein longer than he previously admitted.❑

Prince Andrew looks round as he leaves after attending the Easter Matins Service at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, England, April 20, 2025.

Associated Press

This Swiss village has been swamped and now it's snowed under. They're slowly digging their way out

By JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

BLATTEN, Switzerland (AP) — When a devastating landslide all but swallowed his Swiss village and toppled his three-generation family-owned hotel in May, Lukas Kalbermatten was overwhelmed by a sense of emptiness before the emotions hit. But he choose not to dwell on them long, and snapped into action to rebuild.

The hotelier's response sums up a mindset of many of the 300-odd residents of Blatten: They could have left their bucolic village in the southern Lötschental valley for dead but instead decided to try to see it come alive again one day, and are taking steps to rebuild.

Picture shows the partly flooded village of Blatten after recent snowfalls, five months after a landslide destroyed the village, Blatten, Switzerland, on Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2025.
Associated Press

Authorities evacuated villagers and livestock, but a 64-year-old man was killed as 9 million cubic meters of ice, stone and earth tumbled down from the Kleines Nesthorn peak on May 28. The landslide left a trail about 2½ kilometers (about 1½ miles) wide and 100 meters (about 330 feet) high in places.

It all came down in about a half-minute, coating the valley in plumes of dust. More than 90% of village homes and buildings were destroyed.

"A lot of people were emotional of course, but I didn't get much too emotional," Kalbermatten said. "I was really realistic and the emotions, they came later after three or four days."

If the toll had been higher, locals say, many might not have wanted to return to Blatten. Kalbermatten, whose website for his Hotel Edelweiss in Blatten shows it half-sunk in a pea soup-green pond created by the disaster, joined up with other local families to set up a temporary hotel at the summit of a gondola lift in the neighboring village of Wiler one of three villages in the valley where most Blatten residents relocated.

"For tourism in this valley it's also a catastrophe because we don't have enough beds for all the tourists," he said Tuesday. "The most important for us is to do something quickly."

Laurent Hubert, co-owner of the Nest- und Bietschhorn hotel and restaurant near Blatten, said that it was "pulverized" last May. His wife, Esther Bellwald, is spearheading the new hotel with Kalbermatten. Its website said the families of the staff were "all deeply shaken and endlessly sad" after the hotel was destroyed.

"This project is a bit of the light at the end of the tunnel," Hubert said in knee-deep snow near the construction site, with crews in short sleeves working fast under sunny skies for a planned Dec. 18 opening of the "Momentum" hotel.

A 30-centimeter (12-inch) dump of snowfall over the weekend gave the valley its white wintertime gleam again. In recent months, work crews have restored electricity and telecommunication lines to the Blatten area, used backhoes to dig a drainage canal, and cleared high roads that lead to Blatten, allowing for some exiled residents to briefly return to collect some belongings. Some used rowboats to access attics of inundated homes.

Others lined up to claim lost items found by cleanup crews books, family photos, and heirlooms like a wedding dress.

Manfred Ebener, the construction coordinator in Blatten, said around 400,000 cubic meters of rock and ice remains unstable atop the mountain, making for delicate work in the warmer summer and fall months.

The snowfall and cool temperatures have helped solidify the rock and ice overhead, lowering the risks, but frozen ground will make digging harder.❑

View of the Sagrada Familia basilica, which became the world's tallest church on Thursday after a section of its central tower was lifted into place, in Barcelona, Spain, Oct. 30, 2025.
Associated Press

Barcelona's Sagrada Familia becomes the world's tallest church

By JOSEPH WILSON
Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Barcelona's Sagrada Familia basilica became the world's tallest church on Thursday after a part of its central tower was lifted into place.

The masterwork of architect Antoni Gaudí now rises to 162.91 meters (534 feet) above the city, the church said in a statement. That barely beats out the tip of the spire of Germany's Ulmer Münster, which tops out at 161.53 (530 feet) meters.

The Ulmer Münster, a Gothic Lutheran church built between 1543 and 1890, has held the title of the world's tallest church. That bragging right now gets passed to its Spanish rival. Even though the Sagrada Familia does not claim the title, the numbers are there to compare: it is now just over a meter (3.2 feet) taller than the church in southern Germany.

And the Sagrada Familia is still growing. The central "Tower of Jesus Christ" that is rising from the top of the church will reach 172 meters (564 feet) when it is completed in the coming months.

A crane placed the first part of the tower on top of the nave on Thursday morning.

The first stone of the Sagrada Familia was placed in 1882, but Gaudí never expected it to be completed in his lifetime. Only one of its multiple towers was finished when he died.

Work has sped up over recent decades as the basilica became a major international tourist attraction with people around the world enthralled by Gaudí's unique aesthetic that combines Catholic symbolism and organic forms.

The money from entrance fees is used to fund the ongoing construction. Last year, 4.9 million people paid to visit it, with 15% of those tourists coming from the United States.

Work on the church's elaborate facades and decorating its interior will continue for several years. It is expected to be completely finished around a decade from now, church officials said earlier this year.

Next year will be the 100th anniversary of the death of Gaudí.

The church will hold several events to celebrate his legacy, which includes other stunning buildings in Barcelona and other places in Spain.❑

Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use

(Oranjestad)— Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Sweet potato

According to our elders, sweet potato is mostly useful for low blood pressure. People who suffer from low blood pressure were advised to eat sweet potato 2 to 3 times a week. However, if you have high blood pressure, it is best not to eat too much sweet potato, as this raises blood pressure.

Sweet potatoes are also great for people who work hard labor jobs, and it's been said to be aid blood circulation in the body, as well as help those with hemorrhoids or diarrhea.

Many of our elders opted to plant sweet potatoes themselves, mostly because of how easy it was to do so. Cut the end of a sweet potato let it sit in shallow water until it starts to sprout. Then you may plant it in the ground. Sweet potatoes need plenty of water to grow, especially in the first week in the ground. It was said that once you start to notice the ground crack underneath the flowers, it is time to harvest. This should happen around month 3.

Pomegranate

Pomegranates are also one of the easier fruits to plant and harvest. Originated from Persia, this plant can grow almost everywhere. In Aruba, there are many homes that have a tiny or big pomegranate tree. You may be wondering what the difference is between a small and big pomegranate tree, for which the answer is based on harvest time. Tiny trees produce tinier pomegranates that can be harvested early on. Contrarily, big trees produce bigger pomegranates, but they need enough time to fully ripen before harvesting, otherwise you might end up with bitter seeds. Pomegranate trees are also very easy to plant. In essence, if you just throw the seeds on the ground, they could grow into a tree.

In terms of medicinal use, pomegranate skins are said to have a few benefits for our health. According to customs, pomegranate skin tea can help those that suffer from diarrhea. Dried pomegranate skin tea is also good for people who have worms. Pomegranate flowers can be boiled to make a drink and this can be used for irritated gums; just take a swig and let the tea sit in your mouth for a couple minutes.❑

Source: Remedi i Kustumber di nos Bieunan (Medicine and Customs of our Elderly) by Dinah Veeris

Birds of Aruba: Soaring through the blue skies

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's nature is very diverse and is home to several beautiful and majestic wildlife. Among these is the bright Trupial, whose angelic voice is always heard with the rising sun; the cuddly parakeet, always in company of another, and the majestic Warawara, a mighty bird that can be seen soaring in the clear blue skies.

Trupial

Icterus icterus, or known locally as the Venezuelan or Orange Troupial, is a striking songbird whose bright orange feathers can be spotted from a far distance. Known to be the first bird to sing at the first sign of sunrise, this beloved songbird likes to wake up with a tune. But don't let their angelic songs fools you; the Trupial can be a bit aggressive towards any threat, protective over their nesting spots—nesting spots they most likely stole from other birds. Trupials can be seen regularly, often in trees or on top of a cactus.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

Prikichi (parakeet)

The Brown-throated Prikichi (Aratinga pertinax) became the national bird of Aruba back in 2015, at the request of Aruba Birdlife Conservation. The bright green, adorable parakeet usually flies in flock of 30 or more, but its population has been declining since the 2010s. Prikichis are a shier breed than the trupial, often flying away at the sign of any threat. They use termite nests for breeding spots and feed mostly on seeds from the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi tree and fruits.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

Warawara

The Warawara or Caracara is one of the biggest birds found in the Aruban mondi. At a heigh of 41 to 60 cm, their wingspan can measure up to 125 cm. Known as the "garbage man", this bird of prey mostly feeds on dead animals. Its coat is dark brown, with a cream-colored neck, orange face, thick beak and long legs. The Warawara prefers to build its nest in the middle of tall cacti and produces a rattling, screaming sound, throwing its head back onto its back while calling.

While these birds are a beautiful sight to behold, it is very important to keep your distance and respect their habitats. This is how we protect our wildlife. By admiring the beauty of Aruba in a safe and respectful manner, we can do our part in protecting our sacred nature.

Photo Credit: Aruba Birdlife Conservation

Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge".❑

Aruba's neighborhoods;
the meaning behind their names; Ayo & Alto Vista

(Oranjestad)—Just like any other country, Aruba has unique and beautifully named neighborhoods that all form a part of its culture and development. Many of these names have a historical background and meaning that teaches us about the island and its rich culture every day.

With this series, we want to take you on a journey of discovery, where you'll learn not only the beautiful names but the history behind it that gives it life and meaning.

Ayo

Ajo, or Ayo, is a word with Arawak-Indian origin. A (or Ha) is an Indo-Antillean generalizing word. If you were to change a part of the word "Ayo", namely 'Yo', to 'Yu' and make 'Ayu', it would mean "white."

However, as we now know, the name of the neighborhood is 'Ayo'. The word 'Yo' stands for Yocahu, which is another word for 'creator' in Arawak/Taino and in the Papiamento spoken today, 'Ayo' means 'bye'.

At Ayo, you can find some of the most well known rock formations. These formations became a well loved and visited attraction at Aruba that is held in high regards by both tourists and locals alike.

If you'd like to know more about the rock formations at Ayo, stay tuned for our article where we tell you all about its location and history.

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; A.

Alto Vista

This word combination can be roughly translated to a 'high point of view' and the neighborhood received this name from the Hill.

In the surrounding areas, DomingoAntonia Silvestre built his by his own means the very first chapel or church of Aruba. The walls of this church were made with rocks but the roof was made of dry corn stalks. The church was inaugurated by father Pablo Algemesi

If you'd like to know more about the Alto Vista Church's beautiful history, stay tuned for our article where we tell you all you need to know about it for when you visit it.

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; AV.

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Explore Aruba

(ORANJESTAD)—Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Yes, we know. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.

Arikok National Park

The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In Total the park consists of 34 square kilometers of protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whiptail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the website www.acf.aw

The Lourdes Grotto

Named in commemoration of the famous French religious landmark, was created under the guidance of a priest named "Erkamp" and parishioners in the year 1958. The grotto, a shrine built into the rocks is located in Seroe Preto, just off the main road to San Nicolas. A statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing 700 kilos, was hoisted into place in the grotto. Every year, on February 11 (feast of Lady of Lourdes), a procession leaves from the St. Theresita church in San Nicolas to the grotto, where a mass is performed. The grotto is located road-side and can be visited daily. Just make sure you park safely in the event you wish to stop for pictures at this location.❑

Prohibited by law: leaving the island with seashells, white sand or corals

(Oranjestad)—Often times, the customs department at the airport intercepts many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and/or corals as souvenirs.

Conforming to the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our Flora & Fauna, it is absolutely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba. This is to protect our environment. The high number of seashells, coral and amount of sand confiscated is very strange and it is suspected that our own locals are the ones selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable.

Upon confiscation at the airport, you can also face a fine that they have to pay before leaving. This is surely not a pleasant experience for the tourist. This also leads to a negative reaction which can put our tourism in a negative light.

Though we love to accommodate our visitors, let's all give nature the respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop buying or accepting these from local sellers or companies.

We want our future generations and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals in a sustainable way, without destroying or disrupting the Aruban ecosystem. Help us protect what is ours! ❑

Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!

(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building "Cocolishi", is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called "Willem III Toren". Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III.

Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower.

The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era).

Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government center points, including a tax and stamps office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation (CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into the Historic Museum it currently is.

Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a rich depository of the commercial, military and social history of Oranjestad, offering a glance into how the social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and want to learn more about Aruba, then Fort Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm, and Saturday from 10am-2pm.❑

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan Hartog.

Fun facts about the 'Lisinbein'

The 'Lisinbein' (Scolopendra gigantea), also known as the Giant Centipede, is one of the largest centipedes in the world and is found in Aruba. Its size and hunting prowess make it a fascinating, if often misunderstood, creature.

Despite its fearsome reputation, it plays a crucial ecological role that often goes unnoticed:

As an apex invertebrate predator, Scolopendra gigantea helps maintain balance in the ecosystem. Moreover, they themselves are a food source for birds such as the Crested Caracara (Warawara) and the Aruba burrowing owl (Shoco).

It controls populations of smaller invertebrates and even small vertebrates, ensuring that no species overpopulates, which could disrupt local biodiversity.

Its presence can indicate a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Its sensitivity to environmental changes makes it a bioindicator of ecological balance.

It can reach an impressive length of up to 30 centimeters (approx. 12 inches) and live for around 5 to 10 years in the wild. Its size and longevity makes it a significant and long-term part of the ecosystem.

A mother's love

In Scolopendra species, the 'mother' typically exhibits maternal care by curling around her eggs and newly hatched young. She stays coiled around the clutch, protecting it from predators and fungi, which are serious risks in the moist environments these centipedes often inhabit. The mother maintains a clean environment for the eggs by carefully grooming them, which helps prevent fungal growth that could endanger the brood. This behavior may continue until the young centipedes have undergone their first molt, making them more capable of independent survival.

This form of parental care is beneficial in increasing the survival rates of offspring, as the mother's protection provides a safe 'environment' during their vulnerable developmental stages. It's a fascinating adaptation because it shows a form of care that resembles more complex behaviors observed in vertebrates.

No bark, all bite!

The lisinbein is known locally for having a really painful sting. While venomous, the Lisinbein is generally not aggressive toward humans unless provoked. Its role as a guardian of balance in the ecosystem helps protect the natural beauty of Aruba by keeping the ecosystem in harmony.

Editor's note: Information and pictures provided by Ms. Natasha Silva from the Aruba Conservation Foundation.❑

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today is proud to officially introduce a new segment called Did you know about…?, where we dive into some (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this first edition, we look back at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

In Aruba, we know the 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, along with the 1 and 5 Florin coin. Aruban Florin bills include the 10, 25, 50, 100, and rarely, the 200 bills. In Papiamento we call our currency Florin, but the umbrella term for money is placa. Cents are called cen (pronounced: seng), both in the singular and plural form. Most coins are circular and their size depend on their worth. However, the 50 cent coin is easily recognizable by their square shape, as is the 5 Florin coin by their golden color. Every coin has the Aruban emblem carved on it, with the other side displaying the worth of the coin. The bigger 1 and 5 florin coins, however, contain the carving of the emblem on one side, while displaying the side profile of the Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, on the other side. When his mother, Princess Beatrix, was reigning queen, it was her profile that was carved on the two coins.

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called Dos placa; 10-cent coins were called debchi; 25-cent coins were called diez placa and the 50-cent coin was once called Yotin (pronounced: jo-teen). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called placa too. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

The Aruban Florin collection contains a variation of colorful bills, displaying incredibly detailed and beautiful designs that tell the story of Aruba on a single piece of paper.

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.

Current design and symbolism

10 florin

On the 10-florin bill, you can see a Turtuga blanco (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins, a coral motif, and the symbols of Cas Floria (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called Shoshoro. The birds Trupiaal, Shoco, rock drawings, and the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also a Purun di ceramica (clay pot), in reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

On this bill, we see the Cododo (blue lizard found on the ABC islands), Cangreu di tera (land crab), Willem III Tower, and again the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, as well as a beach plant called Banana di rif. The colors are pink/purple.

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the Yuwana (Iguana), Aloe, Toteki (lizard), the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the Baile di cinta (forkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin

There is another bill with a value of 200 dollars. The brown color symbolizes the earth of Aruba. Here we see the Dornasol and the Warawara—both local birds, along with the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, the Tuna cactus plant, and the Caha di orgel (folkloric instrument, used for many traditional songs).

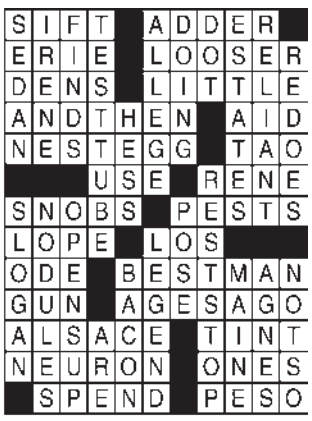
Extra fact:

the word "florin" supposedly is named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word "florino", both explanations related to historical Italian currencies.❑

Source: Placa, placa, placa by the National Library of Aruba

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

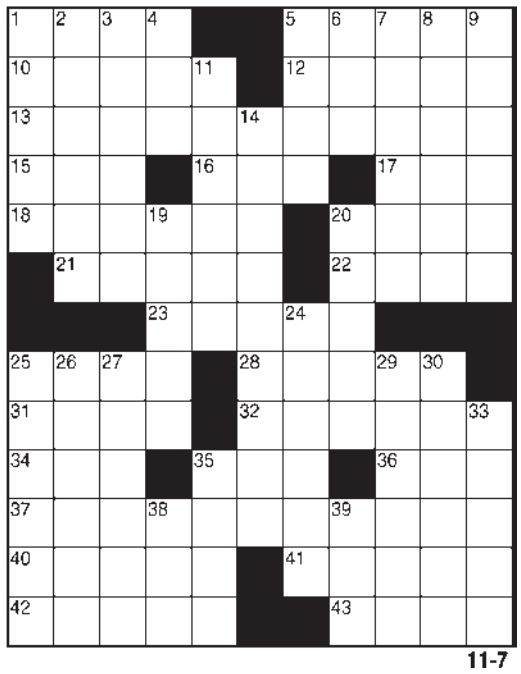


ACROSS

1 "You there!"
5 Lipstick slip
10 Moreno and Hayworth
12 Bisect
13 It shows red and blue states
15 Cobbler's cousin
16 Band blaster
17 "Give — rest!"
18 Be frugal
20 Waiter's aid
21 Fall flower
22 Corn units
23 Battery end
25 Set of stores
28 Stately home
31 "Rome was not built in —"
32 Lever, of a sort
34 Turn bad
35 Had supper
36 French friend
37 It shows an X
40 Painter Matisse
41 Black card
42 Cart pullers
43 Strong — ox

DOWN

1 Gets ready, briefly
2 Sand substance
3 Takes the wheel
4 Tic-toe link
5 Store
6 Chess piece
7 Mark Twain's New York home
8 Film set on Pandora
9 Settles a debt
11 Flower part
14 Unprepared
19 Tuscany setting
20 Quite small
24 Risk takers
25 George Washington's wife
26 Puts on a pedestal
27 Draws toward midnight
29 First Family of 2010
30 Arbor
33 Turn red, perhaps
35 Without repairs
38 "Right you —!"
39 MPG-rating org.



11-7

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-7 CRYPTOQUOTE

G UCX YRGSYN-YUZ URLM G XYCSYLH BZZDGMO; JF JMYGI YRLM, G AJXY CYL. — AJIGC BRGIH

Cryptoquote: ANY MAN'S DEATH DIMINISHES ME ... AND THEREFORE NEVER SEND TO KNOW FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS; IT TOLLS FOR THEE. — JOHN DONNE

Cruise ship Schedule: Nov. 2 - 8 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	CALLS
SUN	02	*FREEWINDS - Dept.*	****	22.30	E	-
TUE	04	SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	C	1
		OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	I	1
WED	05	EMERALD PRINCESS	09.00	18.00	B	1
		CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE	08.00	23.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
SAT	08	ROYAL CLIPPER	09.00	18.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

	8				4			
1	2							4
5			8				1	9
		8				1	5	
6				9				3
		2					6	
			4		2	5		
3			5	8		2		6
		9		7		3		

Difficulty: ★★★★ 10/31

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Answer to previous puzzle

2	3	5	9	7	1	8	6	4
8	7	6	4	2	3	9	1	5
1	9	4	5	8	6	3	7	2
5	6	9	2	3	8	1	4	7
3	1	2	6	4	7	5	8	9
7	4	8	1	9	5	6	2	3
4	5	3	8	6	2	7	9	1
6	2	7	3	1	9	4	5	8
9	8	1	7	5	4	2	3	6

Difficulty: ★★★ 10/30

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Young T. rex or a new dinosaur? New bones add to the debate

This image provided by North Carolina State University shows Associate Research Professor Lindsay Zanno posing with one of her dinosaur finds at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences in downtown Raleigh, N.C. March 25, 2024.

Associated Press

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN
AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Scientists have long puzzled over the origins of a mysterious dinosaur excavated in the 1940s: Was it a young T. rex or another type of dinosaur?

At first, researchers had only a tyrannosaur skull to go by, making it hard to tell if it belonged to a child or adult. Another skull and skeleton nicknamed Jane added to the debate, but didn't settle the controversy.

Now a research team said there's new evidence that resolves the case. The latest clue comes from a complete skeleton first uncovered in 2006 in Montana that scientists say identifies the mystery reptile as its own species and not a juvenile Tyrannosaurus rex.

The discovery "rewrites decades of research on Earth's most famous predator," said study co-author Lindsay Zanno with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and North Carolina State University.

Growth rings within the bones found in Montana's Hell Creek Formation told scientists the new dinosaur was an adult about half the size of a fully-fledged T. rex. From growth comparisons to other reptiles like crocodiles, they also found that the major differences between the creature's skull and an adult T. rex's changes in bone structure, nerve patterns and sinuses were unlikely to form from simply going through puberty.

Signs pointed to a dinosaur that's a distant T. rex cousin known as Nanotyrannus lancensis, the researchers reported in a study published Thursday in the journal Nature.

There's now "more support and evidence than there ever has been" that this T. rex relative could exist, said Holly Woodward, a fossil bone expert from Oklahoma State University who had no role in the new study.

But she's not yet convinced that the other mystery skeletons like Jane are something new.

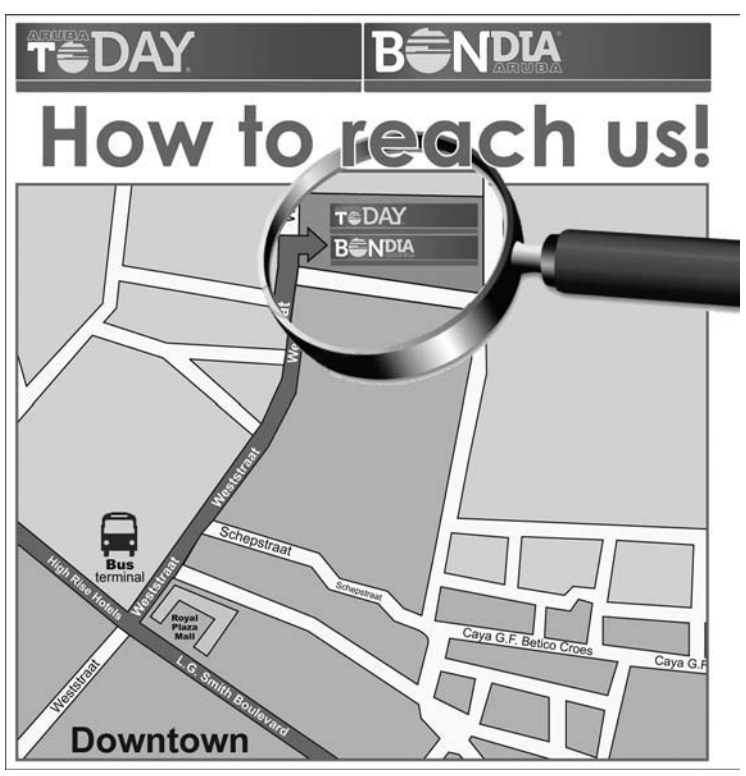
Other independent scientists also said the debate isn't over.

The new skeleton is indeed an adult, but it could be a sister species to T. rex and not a distant relative, said vertebrate paleontologist Thomas Carr of Carthage College.

There are similarities between the shape of T. rex's skull and the mystery specimens that keep him from switching camps.

"I don't think this study settles everything," he said.

Resolving this case of mistaken identity is important to understanding how T. rex grew up, said study co-author James Napoli with Stony Brook University. ❑



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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

You can thank Elvis for Elvira, Cassandra Peterson says

By GINA ABDY
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Cassandra Peterson has entertained Halloween lovers as Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, for more than four decades.

Peterson developed the character in the 1980s, after leaving her career as a showgirl a decision she credits at least in part to Elvis Presley, whom she says essentially saved her life.

"He absolutely changed my life, 100%. I was a showgirl in Las Vegas. I was 17 years old, and he said, 'This is no place for a 17-year-old girl. You need to get the hell out of here,'" Peterson, now 74, recalls. Presley told her she had a nice voice and could become a singer.

"And I was like, seriously? Really? But when Elvis tells you something, you think, maybe I can do this," says Peterson, who did indeed do a stint as a singer.

After Peterson turned to comedy, a local television station in Los Angeles took a chance on her, hiring her to be a horror host. Her instructions? "Put together what you want and just do it," as she remembered in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

This combination of photos shows Cassandra Peterson at the Los Angeles premiere of "The First Omen" on March 26, 2024, left, and Peterson, dressed as Elvira, at the 2016 Knott's Scary Farm Black Carpet Event in Buena Park, Calif., on Sept. 30, 2016.

Associated Press

And thus was born Elvira, with her signature towering black hair and plunging cleavage a look that she was personally comfortable with but, at the time, was considered particularly risque.

"I mean, now everybody, every time you turn on the Grammys or the Tonys or whatever, everybody's got that neckline. But back then it was like, 'What?'" Peterson says.

After a successful run on television, Elvira hit the big screen with a series of feature films and guest appearances. Her cult following grew and led to more television and books. But there was one thing Peterson had on her wish list that she couldn't get the greenlight for, until now: a cookbook.

"I decided I would be the 'Martha Stewart of the Macabre,'" Peterson explains. "And I said to people, 'This would be so fun to do an entertaining book only for my crowd, for my fans, for the goth crowd,'" she says. "And no publishers were down with that. They said it was a Halloween book and there was already a million Halloween kind of cookbooks."

Decades later, "Elvira's Cookbook from Hell" is here, featuring spooky recipes for dinners, desserts, cocktails and appetizers. Peterson also fills the pages with creepy craft ideas, handwritten notes and photos of herself dressed as Elvira.

Peterson was involved in the book from start to finish. "It was really hard, but I had a fabulous team that helped me," she says. "We cooked all the recipes. Some did not make the cut. Some were not Hallowe-en-y enough. Some were not goth enough. Some didn't taste that great. ❑

Dictionary.com's word of the year is '6-7.' But is it even a word and what does it mean?

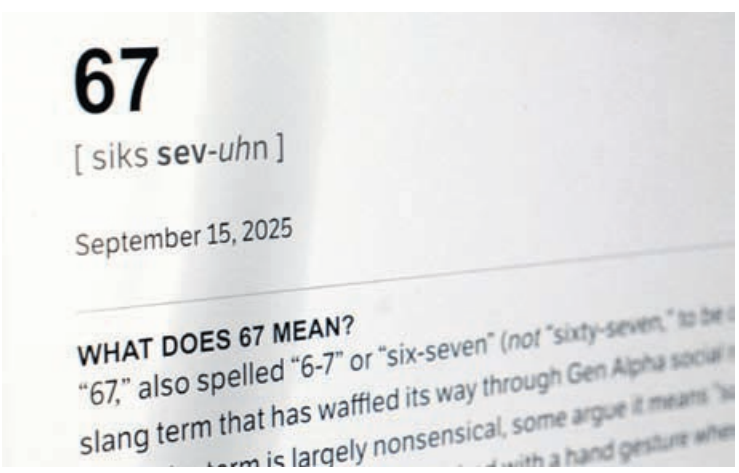
By JOHN SEEWER
Associated Press

Go ahead and roll your eyes. Shrug your shoulders. Or maybe just juggle your hands in the air.

Dictionary.com's word of the year isn't even really a word. It's the viral term "6-7" that kids and teenagers can't stop repeating and laughing about and parents and teachers can't make any sense of.

The word if you can call it that exploded in popularity over the summer. It's more of an inside joke with an unclear meaning, driven by social media.

Dictionary.com says its annual selection is a linguistic time capsule reflecting social trends and events. But the site admitted it too is a bit confused by "6-7."



This Dictionary.com page shows the newest word of the year "6-7" on a computer screen, Thursday, Oct. 30, 2025, in Chicago.

Associated Press

"Don't worry, because we're all still trying to figure out exactly what it means," the site said in its announcement this week.

How did "6-7" become a thing?

It all seems to trace back to rapper Skrilla's song from 2024 called "Doot Doot (6-7)."

That song started appearing in TikTok videos with basketball players, including the NBA's LaMelo Ball who stands 6-foot-7.

Then a boy, now known as "The 6-7 Kid," shouted the ubiquitous phrase while another kid next to him juggled his hands in a video that went viral this year.

That's all it took.

So what does "6-7" mean?

The real answer is no one knows. And sometimes it depends on who's on the receiving end of "6-7."

Even how to write "6-7" is up for debate is it "6 7" or "six seven?"

According to Dictionary.com, the phrase could mean "so-so," or "maybe this, maybe that" when combined with the juggling hands gesture.

Merriam-Webster calls it a "a nonsensical expression used especially by teens and tweens."

Some simply use it to frustrate adults when being questioned.

"It's meaningless, ubiquitous, and nonsensical. In other words, it has all the hallmarks of brainrot," Dictionary.com said. "Still, it remains meaningful to the people who use it because of the connection it fosters."

How has the rest of the world responded?

Parents and teachers have created their own videos trying to explain the sensation. Some offer tips on how to stop their kids from repeating it all day long. Others suggest embracing it even making "6-7" Halloween costumes so it will become uncool.

Teachers have banned it. Influencers and child psychologists have tried to make sense of it.

It's even spilled over into the NFL as a way to celebrate big plays.

Why is it word of the year?

Dictionary.com says it looks for words that influence how we talk with each other and communicate online. The site scoured search engines, headlines and social media trends in making its choice. ❑

As college basketball continues to change, how long will the game's old guard of coaches press on?

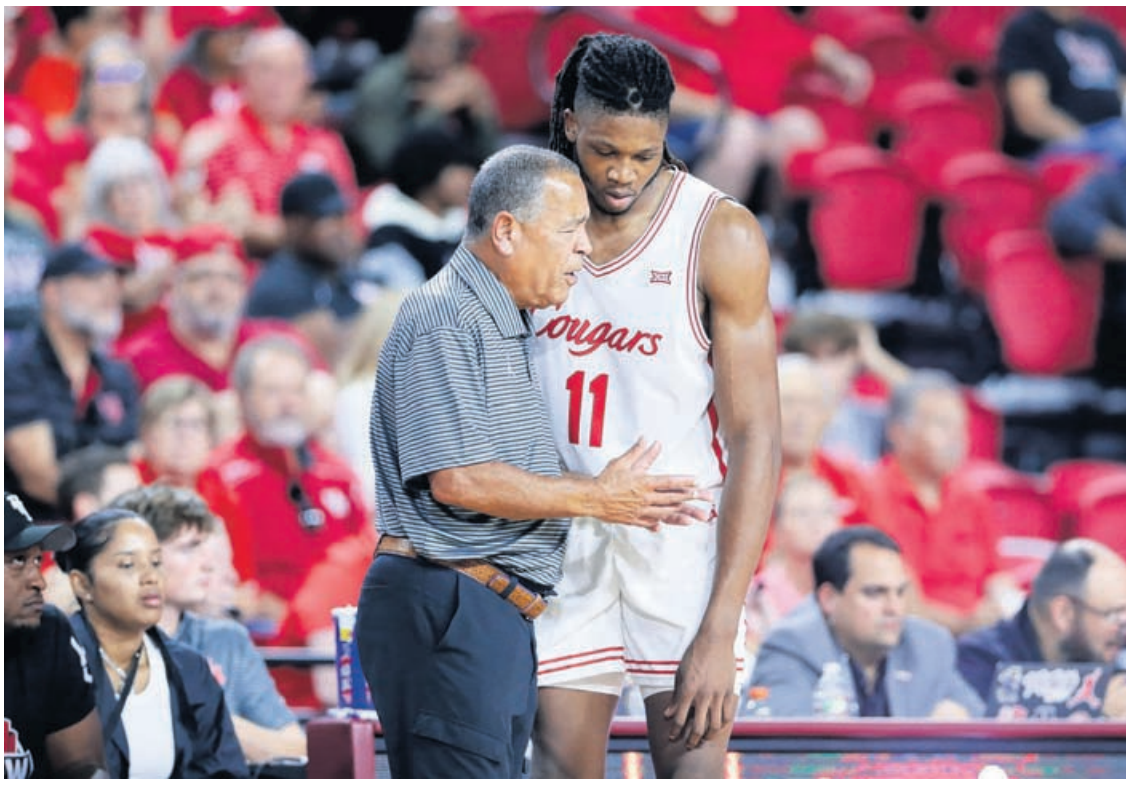
By DAVE SKRETTA
AP Basketball Writer

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — The faces of college basketball players change from year to year these days, as name, image and likeness inducements and the explosion of the transfer portal force coaches to rework their rosters almost every season.

Even coaches seem to change more frequently, perhaps a byproduct of the win-now pressure that comes with all of it.

But there is still a distinct old guard in college hoops Rick Pitino, Rick Barnes, Tom Izzo, Kelvin Sampson, Mark Few and Bill Self, among others who have served as caretakers of the game for an entire generation. They are coaches who have provided stability in a time of instability, and given their fan bases and the game itself a sense of familiarity and comfort.

The question is for how much longer?



Houston head coach Kelvin Sampson, left, talks with forward Joseph Tugler (11) at the bench during the second half of an NCAA college basketball exhibition game against Mississippi State, Sunday, Oct. 26, 2025, in Rosenberg, Texas.

Associated Press

Pitino, who led St. John's to a 31-5 record last season, turned 73 in September. Barnes turns 72 next summer. Izzo, the longest-tenured coach in Division I basketball, will turn 71 during his 31st season at Michigan State. Sampson, coming off a loss in last year's NCAA title game with Houston, turns 70 in October, and already has his son earmarked as the "coach-in-waiting."

Even coaches who seem relatively young Few and Self, coincidentally, turn 63 on the exact same day, Dec. 27 are reaching a point where the stress of roster turnover, recruitment and the pressure to win could simply become too much. In Self's case, he underwent another heart procedure this past summer, though he insists he feels as good as ever.

"I always think about it," Izzo said of walking away from the game. "I don't like where the game has gone in many ways. It has nothing to do with paying players. I just don't appreciate the movement and the way it's gone at all. That's my opinion, and I think that's a lot of coaches' opinions, but some are in the middle of their career and they don't want you (reporters) ripping them for it. I'm at the end of mine. I really don't care if you do."

Such cataclysmic changes to college basketball helped to drive Villanova coach Jay Wright and Virginia coach Tony Bennett to retire earlier than most anyone expected. They probably played a big part in the decision of Auburn coach Bruce Pearl to do the same thing; he turned over the program to his son, Steven, after retiring less than six weeks ago.

Indeed, the game has lost several treasured coaches since the start of last season. With them went a vast amount of institutional knowledge, a track record of success, and a history of producing great players that helped to shape entire programs. There was 76-year-old Jim Larrañaga who, early last season, stepped down from Miami, ending a coaching tenure that began as an assistant at Davidson in 1971. There was 77-year-old Leonard Hamilton, who stepped away after serving as a head coach at Oklahoma State, Miami and Florida State since 1986. And there was Fran Dunphy, also 77, who retired after a career based around Philadelphia and that included stops at Penn, Temple and LaSalle.❑

Sinner reaches Paris Masters quarterfinals and stays on course to reclaim the No. 1 ranking

By JEROME PUGMIRE
AP Sports Writer

PARIS (AP) — Jannik Sinner beat Francisco Cerundolo 7-5, 6-1 in the third round of the Paris Masters on Thursday to extend his indoor winning streak to 23 matches and maintain his chances of reclaiming the No. 1 ranking.

The four-time Grand Slam champion needs to win the tournament to take the top spot from Carlos Alcaraz. Sinner's quarterfinal opponent on Friday will be Ben Shelton.

The fifth-seeded American beat 12th-seeded Andrey Rublev 7-6 (6), 6-3 to secure his place in the eight-man, season-ending ATP Finals in Turin, Italy.

Sinner is chasing a fifth title of the year and 23rd overall. He won an ATP 500 tournament in Vienna last Sunday despite having cramps.

"Hopefully, I can recover physically, which is my main priority" Sinner said ahead of his eighth match against Shelton. "Today was a great match and a great performance from my side."

He leads Shelton 6-1 overall.

Later Thursday, defending champion Alexander Zverev played Alejandro Davidovich Fokina.

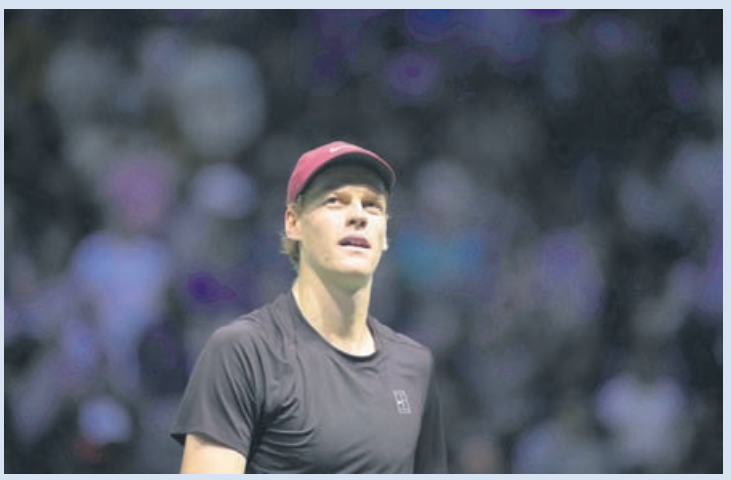
Vacherot keeps going

There seems to be no stopping Valentin Vacherot, who reached another Masters quarterfinal by beating Cameron Norrie 7-6 (4), 6-4.

Already this month, Vacherot made a stunning run from the qualifiers to win the Shanghai Masters for his first career title. He downed 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic in the semifinals and beat his own cousin Arthur Rinderknech in the final.

"I never expected it," Vacherot said. "Good thing that I keep going here, maybe enjoying the matches even more than in Shanghai."

The 40th-ranked Vacherot, who is from Monaco, beat Rinderknech again in the second round here in Paris, setting up a match against Norrie after the British player eliminated Alcaraz.❑



Italy's Jannik Sinner looks on as he plays against Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo during their third round match of the Paris Masters tennis tournament in Paris, France, Thursday, Oct. 30, 2025.

Associated Press

Jets hit bye week with 1 win and plenty of questions and things to fix as NFL trade deadline looms

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr.
AP Pro Football Writer

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. (AP) — Harrison Phillips and his New York Jets teammates were flying home after their first victory of the season and there was something different in the air.

It was a noticeably cheerful group of guys, relieved they were heading into their bye week break with a win following an ugly 0-7 start.

"Yeah, it was awesome," recalled Phillips, a veteran defensive tackle in his first season with the Jets. "You know, it's really fun to see a different side of my teammates that I've never gotten to see. And that's how you react after a win. So a lot of smiles, a lot of joking.

"It was a much more enjoyable plane ride than some of our other few."

No kidding. This wasn't quite the start Aaron Glenn had in mind when he took over as coach of the Jets.

The former Pro Bowl cornerback was back, leading the team for which he played the first eight seasons of his 15-year NFL career. Glenn brought a no-nonsense attitude with him from Detroit, where he was the defensive coordinator the previous four seasons, and hope that he could help put together a squad, as he put it, "where the fans will look up and say, 'We're proud of that team.'"

New York Jets head coach Aaron Glenn celebrates after a rushing touchdown by Breece Hall during the second half of an NFL football game against the Cincinnati Bengals, Sunday, Oct. 26, 2025, in Cincinnati.

Associated Press

Well, through eight games it has been just the opposite.

Glenn's group was the third team in franchise history to start 0-7 and he was the first coach to begin his Jets tenure with seven straight losses.

Glenn never promised a quick turnaround and has repeatedly preached about the importance in building a foundation for future success. Patience, however, is not a virtue for long-suffering Jets fans, and understandably so.

But New York's stunning 39-38 victory at Cincinnati last Sunday at least gave a glimmer of optimism that things could get back on track over the final nine weeks of the season.

"Happy for the win," Glenn said. "We understand still where we're at. We're 1-7. We're not happy about that, but it is what it is. And we get another chance, not this week because of the bye, but next week to get a chance to play Cleveland (on Nov. 9) to continue improving on the things that we're trying to improve on as a team."

And there's plenty to work on.

The offense has struggled mightily under first-year coordinator Tanner Engstrand, who has had to navigate a rough start for Justin Fields that included owner Woody Johnson attributing the quarterback play for much of the team's winless start.

The maligned Fields was benched in favor of Tyrod Taylor two weeks ago and appeared set to stay on the sideline until Taylor injured a knee putting Fields back under center. He rallied with his best performance with the Jets, but he'll need to show more of the same consistently if there's any chance of him remaining the starter the rest of this season and beyond.

"When I was on the field, I damn near started crying," Fields said after the win. "Not because we won, but because of the goodness of God and how everything worked for the greater good. ❑

Nationals finalizing hire of 33-year-old Blake Butera as manager, AP source says

By NOAH TRISTER
AP Baseball Writer

The Washington Nationals are finalizing a deal to hire 33-year-old Blake Butera as manager, according to a person with knowledge of the situation.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on Thursday on condition of anonymity because nothing had been announced. The Nationals fired Dave Martinez in July, and Miguel Cairo took over on an interim basis.

Butera would be the youngest manager since Minnesota's Frank Quilici in 1972, according to ESPN, which first reported Butera's hiring.

Washington has had six straight losing seasons since Martinez managed them to the 2019 World Series title. The Nationals went 66-96 this year.

In this image provided by the Hudson Valley Renegades, Hudson Valley Renegades manager Blake Butera prepares to exchange lineup cards during a minor league baseball game in Wappingers Falls, N.Y., in 2018.

Associated Press

Washington also fired president and general manager Mike Rizzo in July. Paul Toboni is the team's new president of baseball operations.

Butera was a senior director of player development in the Tampa Bay organization. He played two seasons in the Rays' minor league system after being drafted in the 35th round out of Boston College in 2015. It did not take him long to go into managing.

He was a bench coach for short-season Hudson Valley in 2017, then was promoted to manager the following year, becoming the youngest skipper in minor league baseball at 25. He managed Hudson Valley for two seasons and Class A Charleston (2021-22) for two more.

Butera's player development background may be even more intriguing for the Nationals, who broke up their championship core by trading Juan Soto, Trea Turner and Max Scherzer and have tried to rebuild around players like 23-year-old slugger James Wood. It's been slow going.

Toboni is just a couple years older than Butera, and now the Nationals move forward with those two leading the way after an extended stretch under Rizzo and Martinez. ❑